Managing a Volunteer Board: Embracing Your Role as a *Trusted Business Advisor*

Gordon MacPherson
IEEE

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Overview

▸ How did I get here?

▸ What does IEEE’s governance structure look like?

▸ What types of committees and boards have I supported/do I currently support?

▸ What advice do I have for someone who has been tasked with managing the activities of a volunteer board?
A Journey to Board Management

- 12 years in editorial or production roles with commercial publishers, followed by...
- 12 years (so far) in the non-profit space
- Began supporting an editorial board as part of my duties overseeing an eBooks product line
- Changed jobs, then was assigned to support different committees
- Managing the activities of a volunteer board now makes up at least 75% of my job
IEEE’s Board Governance Structure

The IEEE Board of Directors oversees the governing bodies of five operational units:

- Educational Activities Board
- Member and Geographic Activities Board
- Publication Services and Products Board (PSPB)
- Standards Association Board
- Technical Activities Board
Evolution of Support for Committees and Boards

- IEEE Press Editorial Board
- Conference Quality Committee
- Conference Publications Committee
- Products & Services Committee
- Publication Services & Products Board (PSPB)
  - PSPB Strategic Program Committee
  - PSPB Document Working Group
  - PSPB Nominations & Appointments Committee
Two rules of working for a professional association:

Rule # 1:
You work for the volunteer members.
It is not the other way around.

Rule # 2:
If you have any questions, refer back to Rule # 1.
However...

- Even though the volunteers are in charge, you still have a voice, and you owe it to the volunteers (and to yourself) to have a **strong** voice.

- Volunteer board members will accept you as a **partner** if you can contribute valuable knowledge in areas where they need the advice of a subject matter expert.
What are the strengths of a “Trusted Business Advisor”? 

▸ Being in touch  
  - You communicate regularly with the volunteers (i.e., your clients) 

▸ Being in tune  
  - You are aligned with the volunteers on their stated priorities 

▸ Being responsive  
  - You are available when they need you 

▸ Being knowledgeable  
  - Your subject matter expertise is vital toward helping the volunteers make the right decisions for the business
Balancing Policy Development and Administrative Tasks

▸ Become an authority on “who does what” on staff

▸ Know your industry
  - Become familiar with the outside forces that affect the business

▸ Stay well-organized
  - Keep good records, and you will save yourself lots of tedious work

▸ If help is available, take advantage of it
In summary...

▸ Know who is in charge... but know also how important your contributions are to their ultimate success

▸ Embrace the glamorous/fun side of the job *along with* the grinding/administrative side – you need to be adept at both!
THANK YOU